

Building  
sustainable  
communities  
through  
learning



# Australian Learning Communities Network Inc. (ALCN)



Incorporated in NSW.  
No: 9883167  
Australian Registered Body No  
113 273 859

## Annual Report 2020-2021

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## Introduction:

This Annual Report summaries the work of the ALCN Inc. and particularly our place-based learning communities over what has been a challenging year. The word quite frequently used is “pivoting” and our communities have certainly risen to the occasion – locally, nationally, and internationally.

I see my main role as supporting our current and next generation of learning community leaders. Make sure you read the Appendix to this report where you will find inspirational stories of the learning activities led by our practitioners. Everything from helping people find work both online and through workshops; a community orchestra; a living classroom; youth transitions; local learning festivals; community connector and education hubs; leading themes on digital inclusion and health and well-being for UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities; managing the first Global Learning Festival; contributions to a publication for Adult Learning Australia (ALA), and webinars and other activities for PASCAL International Observatory.

ALCN Inc. welcomes feedback on this Final Report, and please send further contributions highlighting your incredible work that we can include in our newsletters. Please contact [alcn@bigpond.com](mailto:alcn@bigpond.com).

Dr. Leone Wheeler, Hon. CEO, ALCN

## Executive Appointments

In accordance with decisions of the 2020 AGM the following members continued as part in their role on the Executive of the ALCN (for terms 2019-2021):

Jan Simmons – (Victoria)

Max Eastcott – Gwydir Learning Region (New South Wales)

Annette Burns– Townsville City Council (Queensland)

Diane Tabbagh – Wyndham City Council (Victoria)

Sally Edwards – Melton City Council (Victoria)

Leone Wheeler – Hon CEO

Diane was appointed as Chair (the position is a 2-year term 2019-2021)

Danielle Hargreaves – Central Coast Council resigned from the Executive and Ken Thompson, Chair of the Hume Learning Community, Victoria, nominated and was duly elected for a two-year term (May 2020 – May 2022).

The Manager, Corporate Services at the Albury-Wodonga Community College (an organizational member), generously agreed to continue to act as the second signature for ease of payment of accounts.

Leone Wheeler took over the position of Hon. CEO/public officer in 2020, while Jim Saleeba, former Hon. CEO/public officer, continues as treasurer and information resource person.

Thanks to the support from Wyndham City Council the Executive now meets via online video (Microsoft Teams) regularly and communicates through email or by phone on a constant basis as issues emerge or to membership demands. Also, thank you to Jac Torres-Gomez from Wyndham for secretarial support to the Executive Committee.

## Congratulations

Peter Kearns, AM: Congratulations to Mr Peter Kearns OAM on the award of AM (Member of the Order of Australia) for significant service to education, particularly adult and lifelong learning.

<https://www.govhouse.qld.gov.au/.../governor...>

## Farewell

Sally Edwards resigned from her position as Coordinator Community Activation and Learning, Melton City Council, and as a member of the ALCN Executive. The Executive thanks Sally for her tireless work in promoting the work of learning cities in Melton, Australia. Internationally. Sally made significant contributions to the ALCN in a number of ways, in particular, workshops, online learning, and co-organising (with Wyndham) the first Global Learning Festival as part of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities. We wish her well for the future. For information about Melton Learning City contact Adam Josifovski, Acting Coordinator Community Activation and Learning, [adamj@melton.vic.gov.au](mailto:adamj@melton.vic.gov.au)

Thank you to Annette Burns who represented Townsville Libraries and Queensland on our Executive and coordinated Townsville's participation in our Webinars. We wish Annette well in her future ventures. Also, thank you Viti Simmons, former General Manager Strategy, Policy and Projects, Sudbury House, in Mirrabooka, who presented at our roundtable on developing Sudbury as a Community Hub and is now pursuing her interests as an author.

## Welcome:

We are pleased to report that Wollongong City Council joined the network this year, and Lara Pugh, Project Leader Learning City, as the key contact. Lara is very enthusiastic about the Learning City movement and she is looking forward to working with the network and especially collaborating with other members from New South Wales with the aim of creating a local network.

We also welcomed Sudbury Community House, located in the Mirrabooka Community within the City of Stirling, Western Australia. Clara Dean, Sudbury Community Education Hub Program Officer, is our new key contact and we look forward to working with her in building this learning community.

Congratulations to Cassandra Connelly on her appointment as a Learning Officer with Brimbank City Council.

## Annual General Meetings

The 2019-2020 AGM was held on 12 May 2020 as an audio conference. However, with support from Wyndham City Council, the bi-monthly Executive meetings are now held using Microsoft Teams. Executive members are a nominated point of contact for their State and for any information to members.

In 2020 contact points were:

NSW – Max Eastcott

Northern QLD – Annette Burns

Victoria – Diane Tabbagh; Jan Simmons;

The Executive also nominate other specific responsibilities around which they are the focal point for information and research. In the past year, these responsibilities were:

Name	Executive position	Additional responsibilities
Max Eastcott	NSW rural contact	Local government contact NSW liaison
Jan Simmons	Victorian contact	Regional Victorian activities
Diane Tabbagh	Victorian contacts	Metropolitan activities, Global Learning Festival, mentoring student intern
All		Participation in deputations when possible
Leone Wheeler	Hon CEO	Overall coordination responsibilities Public officer
Jim Saleeba	Treasurer	
<b>Other Members</b>		
Judith Jensen	Member	Australian Library and Information Association liaison and Queensland contact

## Privacy

The Executive is conscious of the privacy issues affecting members. So, to avoid confusion that can arise with ease of electronic communication, circulation to and the point of contact for members is restricted to

- Leone Wheeler – for issues affecting the membership.
- Those Executive members listed above.

Members' details are distributed only after expressed consent of members.

## Advocacy

ALCN Inc. will meet with or make representations to parliamentarians, State Authorities, or key agencies to argue for recognition of and support for the work of learning communities and learning cities throughout Australia and internationally. In 2020/2021 members of our Executive were involved in incredible work promoting learning communities and learning cities locally, nationally, and internationally.

In 2020/2021 Executive Members:

- Led the development of a Global Learning Festival (Wyndham and Melton City Council).
- Led Urban and Rural Learning Initiative as a Learning City Network (LCN) as part of the PASCAL International Observatory (Dr Leone Wheeler).
- Continued as active members of UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC).
- Continued to liaise with Adult Learning Australia.
- Played an important role in contributing significant content and to Webinars for PASCAL International Observatory and the UNESCO GNLC.

## Information Clearing House on Learning Cities and Learning Communities

A major initiative for 2020 was the redevelopment of the ALCN website. A review of the Learning Communities Catalyst website revealed that a complete update was required. Graphic Designer, Joy Designs, created a new ALCN logo, Facebook banner and, and paper-based membership brochure.

The new website ([alcn.com.au](http://alcn.com.au)) includes links to the learning community strategies, stories, evaluation tools and research of our partners. The site also links to international partners - the PASCAL International Observatory and UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC).

We thank Andrew Williamson, our web and host manager, for continued generous assistance with the site.

## Communication

The main method of communication is through our newsletter entitled “Ripples” which is sent to our members, posted on Facebook, and the PASCAL International Observatory Website.

The newsletter is the main way we communicate with our membership. This newsletter has been redesigned and is now sent via Mailchimp. While there were 4 issues per year in 2020, the aim in 2021 is to send out more frequent newsletters highlighting stories that feature the impact of our member learning communities; relevant innovation; and challenging articles of interest.

### Involvement of members

As the need emerges, the Executive attempts to involve members as vital strategy to engage with its membership. Urgent items, as they arise, are forwarded to members as information, for assistance or for comment.

## Research

### Story Template

Following on from a partnership in 2019 with RMIT University and Hume Learning Community Inc, where an RMIT student investigated ‘How could Stories of Crucible Learning be best represented in a publication by the Australian Learning Community Network?’, Leone worked with Ken Thompson, Chair of the Hume Learning Community, to develop several story templates for the following types of learning community stories:

- Learning City Profile (following on from the example of Wyndham Learning City – see <http://lcn.pascalobservatory.org/participants/wyndham-city-council>).
- A Learning Community Programme focussing on outcomes and which links to appropriate State and Federal policies, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – see McKay, J, Enable Social Enterprises – Renew Tech for Good Initiative, Hume Learning Community. Retrieved from <https://alcn.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Feature-Story-March-2021-Hume-Learning-Community-Enable.pdf>.
- An Opinion Piece
- A Learning Community Story using the Most Significant Change technique.

The aim is that once enough stories are gathered that the ALCN will put together a publication. If you are interested in submitting a story using one of the about methods, please contact Leone Wheeler.

## Student Placement

For the second half of 2020, the Australian Learning Communities Network (ALCN), RMIT University and Wyndham City Council partnered to host an RMIT International Development student, Hellen Kibowen, to work with Wyndham City Council on the research and evaluation of two key projects: The Global Learning Festival (GLF) held in September 2020 and the Wyndham Learning Festival held in November 2020. Hellen comes from an indigenous community in Kenya and brought her enthusiasm and efficiency to her work. Hellen, with assistance from the Wyndham team, added invaluable insight, humour and commitment to the two projects developing questionnaires and writing stories using the Most Significant Change Technique to showcase the impact of the two festivals on those involved. Hellen shared her reflections about her placement at the first ALCN Executive meeting for 2021 in February.

The ALCN and Wyndham City Councils were very impressed with the calibre of the RMIT student and are hosting another RMIT International Development student, Ava Ter, for the first half of 2021 to help with an ALCN Webinar and the *Learn West* Earning for Learning Festival.

## Publications:

Leone Wheeler worked with Diane Tabbagh from Wyndham City Council on a conference paper for the Adult Education in Global Times 2020 conference and were invited to include a more detailed version of the paper in the special 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition of the Australian Journal of Adult Education. See

Tabbagh, D. and L. Wheeler. *Wyndham City: A Tale of Steady Progress Towards a Sustainable Learning Community*. in *Adult Education in Global Times*. 2020. Vancouver University of British Columbia. p. 647-655. Retrieved from [https://edst-educ.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/06/aegt\\_proceedings\\_upload.pdf](https://edst-educ.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/06/aegt_proceedings_upload.pdf)

Wheeler, L. and D. Tabbagh, *Wyndham City: A tale of steady progress towards a sustainable learning community*. Australian Journal of Adult Learning, 2020. **60**(3): p. 492-514.

## Networks

### Regional Networks

The ALCN encourages the formation of regional learning networks. These networks can support and share ideas and resources locally.

A good example of a cross Council Network is *Learn West* which meets regularly to share knowledge. Its membership includes Maribyrnong; Wyndham; Brimbank; Moonee Valley; Melton; Hobsons Bay; Darebin; Maribyrnong; Ballarat; and Hume. Their latest innovative project is the [Learning for Earning Festival](#) and our ALCN members (Wyndham,

Brimbank, Hume and Melton) are collaborating with several other Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the West of Greater Melbourne and this festival is happening virtually from 27-29 May 2021.

An example of a community learning network across a city is the Hume Learning Community Inc (HLC) which continues to maintain community strengthening activities with several local learning organisations within the city.

An example of a rural learning community network is Gwydir Learning Region, and I had the pleasure of visiting them earlier in the year and this story is included in the Appendix.

Lara Pugh, Learning City Project Officer, Wollongong City Council is keen to establish an NSW network of ALCN members and we look forward to building this network in the coming year.

### **Adult Learning Australia**

ALCN Inc. and ALA continue to collaborate on matters to do with the promotion of lifelong learning throughout Australia. For example, Diane Tabbagh, Coordinator Learning Community, Wyndham City Council/Chair of that ALCN and Dr Leone Wheeler were invited to contribute to the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition of the Australian Journal of Adult Learning.

### **International Networks**

ALCN Inc. supports the **UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities** and promotes UNESCO's GNLC newsletters and webinars to our members. It is pleasing to note that Australia now has three local government areas that are now members of the GLNC, including Melton City, and City of Wyndham, and Circular Heads in Tasmania

### **PASCAL International Observatory**

ALCN Inc. is a member of this international network and this has enabled, as well, individual members, upon registering, to keep abreast of developments in other parts of the world.

Leone Wheeler and Peter Kearns are members of the Board of PASCAL International Observatory. Our members play an active role in the work of PASCAL. Wyndham and Gwydir are featured on the PASCAL Learning City Network (LCN). Wyndham regularly participates in Webinars and is an active participant of the group *Reimagining Economic Futures*, while Gwydir Learning Region is contributing to the *Urban-Rural Learning Initiatives* group.

## **Webinars/Forums**

The ALCN takes opportunities to join with other member organisations to contribute to Webinars and other professional development activities where possible. Last year the ALCN contributed events as a valued partner to the first Global Learning Festival, led by Wyndham City Council and Melton City Council, and in partnership with Wyndham City Council organised a virtual roundtable '*Celebrating Entrepreneurial Models of Learning Communities and Cities*'.

### **1. Celebrating Entrepreneurial Models of Learning Communities and Cities.**

Our major professional development event was held on 23 November 2020. Our major partners were Wyndham City Council and PASCAL International Observatory. Wyndham City Council, Melton City Council and Hume Learning Community in Victoria; Townsville Libraries in Queensland, Gwydir Learning Region in New South Wales, and Sudbury Community House in Western Australia all contributed speakers.

Our international Guest Speaker was Judith James, PASCAL Board member and former Head of Strategic Regional Collaboration, Swansea University, Wales, UK, who spoke on why in a POST COVID world it is important to develop an inclusive entrepreneurial spirit within learning cities and communities.

Martin Probst, CEO Chief Education Officer, PROfound Leadership

<https://profoundleadership.com.au/> spoke about developing entrepreneurial leadership skills necessary for a changing environment.

Max Eastcott, CEO of Gwydir Shire Council, prepared a pre-recorded address on Gwydir Learning Region. [Read more.](#)

Daryl Wilson, Business Relations Advisor, Climate Futures Office, Wyndham City Council presented on Wyndham Innovation.  
(<https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/wynnovation>)

We also enjoyed dynamic presentations from Melton (the Hot House and other Entrepreneurial programs); Townsville City Libraries, QLD (Entrepreneurs in Residence programme); the Hume Learning Community ([Enable Social Enterprises](#)); and Sudbury Community House, WA (Sudbury Community Education Hub).

More information about the successful Australian Learning Communities Network 2020 Virtual Roundtable Celebrating Entrepreneurial Models of Learning Communities and Cities can be found at: <https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/news/australian-learning-communities-network-2020-roundtable-%E2%80%93-celebrating-entrepreneurial-models>

## 2. Global Learning Festival

From 1-4 September 2020, the City of Melton and the City of Wyndham co-led the inaugural Global Learning Festival (GLF) with over 20 other partners including the PASCAL Observatory and the Australian Learning Communities Network (ALCN) who helped bring this event to life. The Melton and Wyndham teams were ecstatic to see many different countries and continents participated, in over 110 events including Turkey, U.K., Israel, Qatar, Taiwan, Colombia, Mexico, the United States and Australia, taking advantage of the many lifelong learning opportunities over the 4 days of the festival.

For more information read the Evaluation Report [here](#).

The ALCN Inc contributed directly to two Webinars for the GLF:

- Dr. Leone Wheeler facilitated an Evaluation Webinar – *Collective Impact Assessment* about the practical application of the *Collective Impact Assessment Tool (CIAT) (City of Melton, 2017) – Tuesday 1 September 2020*. Diane Tabbagh was a keynote speaker.
- Dr Leone Wheeler was an invited guest speaker at an RMIT University Webinar contribution to the GLF on *SDGs, Lifelong Learning and Learning Communities – 28 August 2020*.

The next GLF will be held on 8-11 November 2021. For more details go to <https://www.globallearningfestival.com/> or to be on a Working Group email Diane Tabbagh - [Diane.tabbagh@wyndham.vic.gov.au](mailto:Diane.tabbagh@wyndham.vic.gov.au).

## Strategic Plans

During the past years, several requests for Strategic and Educational plans were handled. Examples of such plans are continually forwarded and will be placed on our website. Some of the best examples are from:

Brimbank (Vic);	<a href="#">Brimbank Lifelong Learning Strategy 2018-2023</a>
Hume City (Vic);	<a href="#">Hume Multiversity</a>
Melton (Vic):	<a href="#">Melton Community Learning Plan 2015-2018</a>
Wyndham (Vic);	<a href="#">Wyndham Learning Community Strategy 2018-2023</a>
Townsville (QLD)	<a href="#">Learning and Recreation in Townsville</a>
Kentish Council, Tasmania:	<a href="#">Kentish Learning Community Strategy 2016</a>



Circular Head Council and Waratah Winyard Council, Tasmania:	<a href="#">Health and Wellbeing Plan</a> 2019-2024
Rockingham (WA):	<a href="#">Education and Training</a>
Wollongong (NSW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Creative Wollongong 2019-2024 Plan,</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Sustainable Wollongong 2030 Strategy,</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Ageing Plan 2018-2022</a></li> </ul>

## Membership Funds

These funds were audited through the certificated auditor. This financial statement is recommended by the Executive for approval by members at the Annual General Meeting. The statement is then circulated to members.

The previous requirement for forwarding the audited financial details to the NSW Office of Fair Trading has been changed and overall funds of the ALCN Inc. are now the prerequisite level for reporting.

**This report was compiled by the Executive for circulation prior to a motion of acceptance at the Annual General Meeting of the ALCN. Financial Statements are tabled at the AGM and are available to members upon request.**

## Appendix: A Snapshot Sample of Member Achievements 2020/2021

*The following is a snapshot of our learning cities and communities report on their activities for the 2020/2021 year.*

### 1. Learning Activities in Ballarat, Victoria

– Jan Simmons

#### **Ballarat ---- Learning for Work**

The Work and Learning Centre is a job seeker activity which is one of the major initiatives that the Ballarat neighbourhood centre worked on in 2020-2021. This innovative program is funded by Jobs Victoria and is managed by the Brotherhood of St Lawrence. This very effective model can be found in Moe, Shepparton, Geelong, Carlton and Ballarat. Each location brings the local flavour to their site this reflects the character of the geographic area and local situation.

#### **“I Just Want a Job”-much more than a time spent on SEEK**

#### **The Ballarat Work and Learning Centre approach to working with unemployed people**

“I just want a job-I will do anything” are the words that often come with a job seeker on their first visit to the Work and Learning Centre. Once we are through the reality that there are many things they would not want to do and started to look at barriers to work readiness then we can start to get an action plan in place.

Working with job seekers is a collaborative process that assesses, plans, implements, co-ordinates, monitors and evaluates the options and services required to meet the job seekers service needs. At its core, the process is about transforming lives through individualised care and services. This is not a formal process but one in which we support individuals seeking employment including the creation of learning pathways.

At the initial meeting between the Job Seeker and the advisor the time is used to collect information needed to build a full job seeker profile which includes demographic information about the Job Seeker, identifying any immediate needs and begin to establish trust and build the relationship. This first interaction is helpful in determining the job seekers individual needs. If the needs fall outside the brief of the organisation the Advisor works to identify and refer the Job Seeker to an outside community resource.

As the relationship progresses, we go into greater depth on the Job Seekers individual challenges and goals with the primary purpose of identifying problems, interests and risks to success. By creating an action plan specific goals can be laid out that are achievable and focussed. Regular meetings are schedules which enable achievements to be quantified and qualified.

By providing the holistic approach to creating and managing the action plan and believing people have the right to participate in decisions that affect them, the Job Seeker autonomy is encouraged and part of the planning. Yes, job seeking is more than time on SEEK.

## 2. Brimbank, Victoria

- Danielle Marie

The activities listed support the implementation of the **Brimbank Lifelong Learning Strategy 2018-2023**, a framework for building better learning outcomes. The events of 2020 and the global pandemic heavily influenced the way Brimbank has supported the community, with a concentrated effort to support young learners whose school year was disrupted, young people and adults who faced unemployment in an uncertain time, and older adults who experienced isolation due to the lockdown.

The Strategy guided Council actions to improve learning outcomes in Brimbank through a life stage approach with a focus on the following life stages:

- i) Early Years (birth to compulsory school age)
- ii) School Years (compulsory school age 6-16 years)
- iii) Young People (post-compulsory school age, 17 to early adulthood)
- iv) Adults (25 – 60 years)
- v) Later Life (60 years and beyond)

Planning is completed and development is underway for a pilot **Family Reading Time Project**. Due to COVID-19, the project has not yet commenced however the project model and planning guide has been finalised with trainers sourced to commence volunteer training in Term 3. Local stakeholders have been informed about this upcoming pilot to ensure adequate and targeted family referrals to program. A working group has been established with key internal representatives to establish processes and monitor project timelines.

**Baseline Measures** have been developed for each life stage. These Measures will support Council and its partners to monitor specific priorities and trends to inform a framework for future work and to understand whether or not there has been a positive shift in intended outcomes or measures identified in the Lifelong Learning Strategy.

In collaboration with Learn West a **Learning for Earning Festival** has been designed and launched in April 2021. The festival will take place online May 27, 28 and 29, 2021. Festival partners include Hobsons Bay, Melton, and Wyndham Councils, Learn Locals, VU Jobs & Skills Centre, Gordon Institute, and several industries that will talk about the skills people need to enter the jobs market. Industries with a shortage of workers have been engaged, to offer a direct link and speak about pathways into roles, including, getting into the building industry, becoming a swim teacher, early childhood work, aged care and dental assistants, all of whom are experiencing a shortage of staff in the west. The festival will also offer sessions on how to start your own business, pathways to courses and resume and employability skills.  
<https://www.learnwest.org/events>

### Response to Covid-19

In response to the Covid-19 shutdown, Brimbank developed several new programs for children, families and individuals to support learning, literacy, digital literacy, wellbeing, recreation and social connection while people stayed at home.

Early literacy programs were delivered online to support families and to continue important pre literacy learning from home. Weekly science activities supported school age children, online book groups were created to support adults, and wellbeing programs were offered to support people experiencing isolation. Seniors were supported over

the phone to learn how to use zoom to enable connection to others and access to programs. A newly developed *Library To Your Door* service was created in April to ensure the community continued to have access to free learning and literacy materials that were delivered directly to their homes. New Online learning resources were added to the libraries database to further support remote learning.

Several council departments delivered online pathways to learning and employment sessions, collaborating with VU Jobs and Skills centre, RMIT, Community Plus and other Learn Locals.

### **Studiosity**

Brimbank acquired Studiosity in 2020. Studiosity is a free online tutoring program, which provides study help to all students and community members.

Studiosity employs subject matter experts which are available 24/7 to provide quick one on one tutoring support to students of all ages from grade 3 to postgraduate level. Students can upload their essay/written work and receive feedback within 24hours.

As well as being an invaluable study help resource for students, the service also provides support to job seekers by providing feedback on their resume and cover letter and assists with job search skills. This service is free to all Brimbank library members.

### **Western Chances**

Brimbank Council provides an annual \$10,000 scholarship grant to Western Chances who support students to stay at school with practical assistance such as transportation costs, IT, text books and stationery.

The following activities and projects support the implementation of the **Brimbank Youth Jobs Strategy 2018-2023** which was developed in response to high youth unemployment and disengagement from learning, training and education.

Between August and December 2020, Council conducted a '**Career Pathways**' program. The program consisted of 13 online sessions on the job market post COVID-19, TAFE and areas of skills shortages. Sessions were in high demand attracting young people as well job-seekers aged 30 and above.

Council was successful in receiving a \$660,000 grant from the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions to employ **Jobs Victoria Advocates (JAs)**. The JAs will help people who have lost their jobs due to the effects of the pandemic and the long-term unemployed to access employment services, training opportunities and other supports. The JAs will be proactive and mobile to connect with people in most need of support in Brimbank including in shopping centres, libraries, community centres and other popular venues. The program will commence in May 2021.

The **Social Procurement in the West** project was held from September 2020 to March 2021 and was funded by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, with Brimbank the project's lead delivery partner on behalf of the six western region Councils – Brimbank, Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley, Melton, Wyndham and Hobsons Bay. The project engaged with key stakeholders including businesses, major transport authorities, the education sector and social enterprises to develop a more integrated and effective western region response to social procurement. The project developed a model to support the creation of more local jobs for local young people experiencing disadvantage.

In response to growing youth unemployment rates in Brimbank, **Project BRIMPact** reimagined recruitment, training and retention processes co-designed by young people and participating local businesses and organisations. The project ran from October 2019 to May 2020 and was funded by the Federal Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business' Regional Employment Trials. BRIMPact incorporated youth participation and social procurement practices, to improve outcomes on both sides of the labour market. The project team included Brimbank City Council, YLab Global, ArcBlue and Job Prospects who secured 24 job outcomes for young people and eight policy recommendations and business solutions through meaningful engagement with over 70+ local young people.

### 3. Gwydir Learning Region, NSW

This report is based on Leone Wheeler's visit to Gwydir Shire in March 2021.

One of the first questions Max Eastcott, the CEO of Gwydir Shire, thinks about is:

*What makes an attractive community so that people want to come, live, and raise their families in the Shire?*

The answer to this question for Max influences the role of the Council that he leads and means that the focus is on more than the traditional roles of 'roads, rates, and rubbish'. In fact, every aspect of economic development in the Shire is viewed through the lens of learning. This is one of the factors that led to the creation of the Gwydir Learning Region in 2003 (see Mitchell, 2006). Rick Hutton, CEO of Gwydir Learning Region reinforced that the point of difference between Gwydir and other local councils is this lifelong learning approach.

#### Sport

Sport has always played a vital role in making social connections and providing inclusion in rural communities. My visit coincided with a visit by the Australian Women's 7 Rugby Union team! The women stayed at the Living Classroom in Bingara, also visiting Warialda and Moree as part of their training leading up to the Tokyo Olympics, set to start this July.

The team very generously visited and inspired local school children and trained with local teams. I enjoyed watching the Women's 7 Team train with local women at the Gwydir Oval and the country hospitality. (Read more at <https://www.bingara.com.au/australian-womens-7s-rugby-union-visit/>).



Leone and Max enjoying country hospitality at a rugby training session.

#### The Living Classroom



Agriculture is a primary driver of the Gwydir economy and so it is appropriate that an agricultural trade training centre, The Living Classroom, has also been established and is going from strength to strength. I really enjoyed visiting this centre. The Centre includes a hostel so students from the urban areas can visit and learn about agriculture. I learnt that the olive grove that you see as you drive in was rescued and the olives will be used to teach people how to press olives; a horticulture centre propagating native plants; a cattle club to teach young people how to care for their animals, and a community kitchen garden. I was most interested in the [Carbon Farm](#), a collaborative venture between the Shire and local farmers, and tests different ideas to capture carbon. In the future there will be experiments in growing indigenous grasses and it is hoped to add this to local wheat production. The Centre is testing different ideas to do with what is termed 'The Circular Economy' and thus contributing to a sustainable economic future for the Shire.

#### Automotive Trade Training Centre -

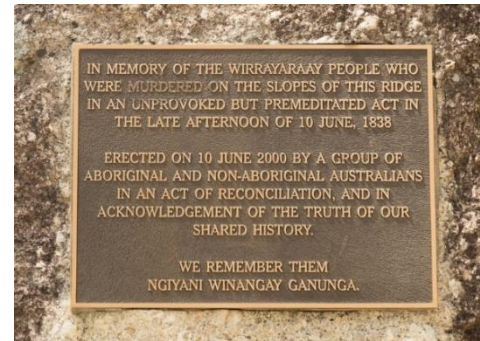
The Peter Cuskelly Centre is the Automotive Trade Training Centre, one of three trade training centres funded in 2009, is attached to Warialda High School. Courses include welding, automotive and a driver training course. Students can work towards units of competency in a Certificate II in Engineering. The welding equipment is very impressive!



Max Eastcott and TAFE Teacher – Kingsley Grills at the Automotive Centre

### The Myall Creek Memorial

A visit to a memorial of a site of the murder of 28 unarmed Aboriginal men, women and children on June 10, 1838 at Myall Creek Station was very moving. A court case followed, and it was the first time in Australian history that white men were tried for crimes against Aborigines. Seven men were hanged for their part in the crime. Friends of Myall Creek, the Shire Council and local indigenous communities cooperated to build this monument [Read more.](#)



### Recognition of the Role of Country Women

100 years of the Country Women's Association (CWA) in New South Wales (NSW) was celebrated in Bingara early in January 2021. It is with pride that Grace Emily Munro, the founder, and the first president of the CWA in 1922 came from Bingara. The CWA advances the rights and equity of women, families, and communities, through advocacy and empowerment, especially for those living in regional, rural, and remote Australia. [Read more.](#)



### The Arts

The Roxy Theatre continues to be amazing and the story worth repeating. Three migrants of Greek heritage developed the theatre in 1936 and it provided a range of entertainment for the locals until it went out of business in 1958. For the next 40 years, apart from the occasional film screening and other events, it lay dormant. The Council bought the facility in 1999, and with the help of partners, including a TAFE College set about restoring the beautiful Art Deco theatre. The young people who worked on that restoration all found employment and some of these young people set up their own businesses and stayed on in the Shire. A hospitality trade training centre was also established but lately has been affected by COVID which has meant currently the facility is closed. However, not for long as plans are afoot to open again [Read more.](#)

You can discover the stories, culture, history, and heritage of three locations within the Gwydir Shire – the towns of Warialda and Bingara and information about Myall Creek through soundtrails (for more information visit [soundtrails.com.au](http://soundtrails.com.au)).

## 4. Hume City Council, Victoria

George Osborne, Manager Economic Development, reports that while the Hume Global Learning Village no longer exists, 9 years ago Council established the Hume Jobs and Skills Task Force, which is supported by Economic Development. It has a focus on skills for employment, rather than cradle to grave education. It is fuelled however, by the same generosity of spirit and community focus that we saw so often in the HGLV and the membership is drawn from all levels of government, industry, education and community across Hume.

## 5. Hume Community Learning Inc (HLC), Victoria

- *Ken Thompson, Chair, HLC*

The Hume Learning Community Inc. is established to be a charity whose purpose is to advance education by pursuing the following goals:

- To address social inequalities and provide a forum for local community to have a voice and increase lifelong learning opportunities for people who are disadvantaged, upholding the principles of equality, access, participation and social justice;

- To inspire and promote participation of Hume residents in lifelong learning (formal, informal and non-formal) experiences regardless of age, ability, religion, ethnicity, race, gender, disability or socioeconomic status;
- To reduce social isolation of individuals and groups within the community and provide forums for inclusion, participation and pathways to learning; and
- To act as a champion of lifelong learning for all and actively build and facilitate a strong local stakeholder network and collaborative initiatives as the foundation for individual learning.

The focus is to maintain and grow communication and cooperation between some leaders in lifelong learning in Hume. The goal is to support member organisations and community members with their initiatives and well as develop projects that will promote the HLC goals that are beyond but incorporate the remit of each organisation.

A research paper by former resident and leading teacher, Matthew O’Hagan highlighted the significant challenges that remain in achieving improved learning, social and economic outcome for Hume residents. He highlighted the Collective Impact model. The impact of the HLC Inc. will be achieved through the collective efforts of member organisations.

In-between meetings, the members share information on relevant developments, research, professional development opportunities and seek advice and help from one another. Members support and celebrate each other’s successes, and there are many.

Membership of HLC Inc. includes representation from the disability, tertiary, education and community education sectors. Valuable liaison with the local Member of Parliament is maintained.

Like other community-based organisations the year 2021 has been very challenging from many angles for local learning organisations. However, HLC Inc. members have continued to develop new partnerships in new ways and achieve significantly. Among those achievements are the twenty-fifth anniversary of the LLEN, the state-wide category and overall business award won by Enable, continued significant developments in early childhood education, the continued emergence of the Hume Orchestra Orchestra, among others.

On a broader scale, HLC Inc. members have contributed to the development of a template for the gathering of stories in lifelong learning, as well as providing some the very first of those stories.

## **6. Melton, Victoria**

- Adam Josifovski

*Sally Edwards finished up with Melton City Council in December 2020. Adam Josifovski has been acting in the role to date.*

The areas of responsibility continues to include the development and delivery of Council’s Learning City policy and strategies, as well as lifelong learning, community activation and programming to respond to community need at both the municipal and local neighbourhood level. Management of Council’s Community Hub, Learning Centres and other community facilities ensures Melton Council is delivering enhanced outcomes for community in engagement, empowerment, activity, and community learning objectives.

A highlight of 2020-21 was the formation of Melton City Council’s Community Connector Hubs. The Community Connector Hubs were formed in a direct response to communities emerging needs brought about by the coronavirus pandemic. The Community Connector Hubs consisted of eight elements:

- Food Relief
- Care Packs

- Financial Counselling
- Mental health Counselling
- Targeted Social Connections
- Job Readiness
- Digital Connections
- Connector Service

The Community Activation & Learning team quickly pivoted and adapted from our normal face-to-face delivery of community learning programs to an online format. This initially began as 5-week pre-recorded video series on the 'Melton City Council Learning Directory' YouTube channel and covering a variety of topics, it has grown substantially since its inception and to date:

- Has over 1,000 subscribers
- Published over 149 videos
- Achieved in excess of 87,000 views collectively

The 2020 Melton Lifelong Learning festival went completely online in November 2020. Over 500 participants attended the four day Festival which featured 104 free events covering a range of themes such as Craft and Makers, Learning for Earning, Families and Fun, Tech Time, Food Adventures, Garden and Sustainability, Health and Wellbeing.

Melton continues to jointly coordinating the theme of **Digital Inclusion** for the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, along with a focus on increased digital literacy in the municipality.

Melton's City of Learning Strategy 2020 – 2030 will be finalised soon and will support the ongoing development of Melton as a place to live, a place to learn and a place to grow. Council's aim is to be a City of Learning that fosters creative lifelong learning that inspires and enables all our residents to reach their best, to build a better quality of life for themselves, their families and that of the wider community.

## 7. Wollongong City Council, NSW

- Lara Pugh

### Laying the Foundation of a Learning City – Wollongong City Libraries



The City of Wollongong is a local government area in the Illawarra region about 80km south of Sydney. Wollongong was originally inhabited by the Dharawal people and today is home to nearly a quarter of a million people of whom approximately 20% were born overseas. Wollongong City Libraries (WCL) plays a core role in delivering on Wollongong City Council's WCL is now driving an innovative project to establish Wollongong as a Learning City; as such, it is currently addressing the three fundamental conditions for building a learning city, as per the Framework of the Key Features of Learning Cities (Figure 1) in the [UNESCO](#)

[Guiding Documents](#). At present, this involves establishing the governance with lifelong learning stakeholders across the organisation to map existing resources, identify gaps and develop a draft action plan. It is understood that Wollongong City Council needs to lay the groundwork internally before going out to the community.



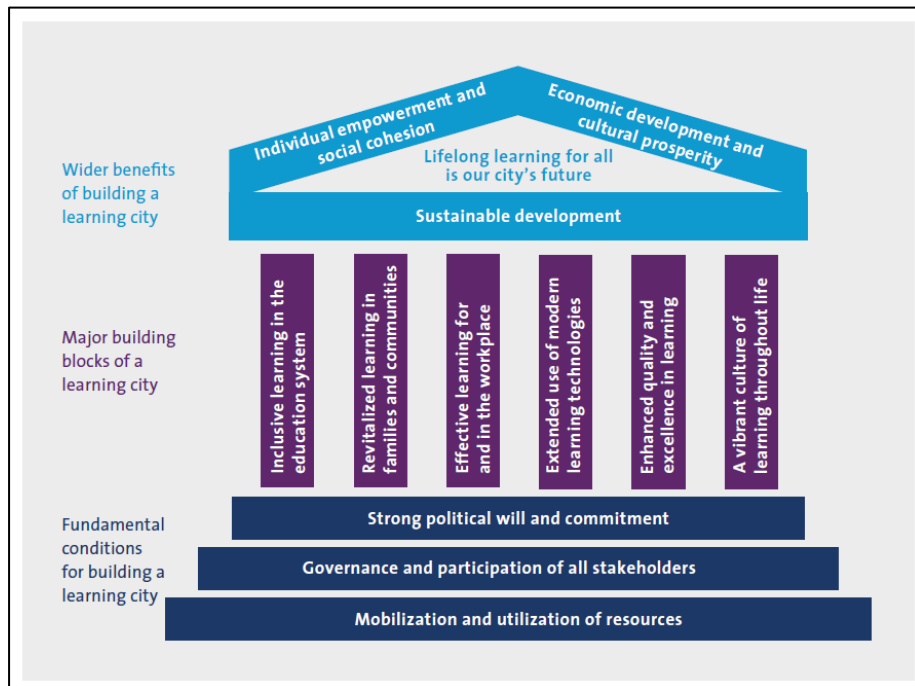


Figure 1 The Framework of the Key Features of Learning Cities

## (1) Strong political will and commitment

The Wollongong City Council Library and Community Services Division is fostering the political will and commitment of the Council through numerous means:

- i. The [Wollongong City Libraries Strategy 2017-2022 – Your library, your place](#) sets out a clear vision to inspire reading, lifelong learning, creativity and inclusion in the community, deliverables of which include “develop and deliver training and educational programs to meet diverse community needs” (p.15).
- ii. The submission of a Wollongong Learning City Project Business Proposal to Wollongong City Councillors for consideration in 2020 to endorse the investigation into Wollongong becoming a Learning City.
- iii. The appointment of a Project Leader to develop the systems, processes and connections for establishing a Learning City.

## (2) Governance and participation of all stakeholders

Engagement with internal stakeholders and the establishment of a governance model is a priority for the Learning City Project in 2020-21:

- i. A Learning City Internal Engagement Report was developed in 2020 in consultation with 30+ staff members across several business units. The purpose of this engagement was to establish where and how the Learning City Project fits into current and prospective scopes of work within Wollongong Council. Key findings include:
  - Overall, participants were supportive of the concept of the Learning City Project; it is understood that learning (and the ability to learn) is central to achieving and maintaining social, economic and environmental sustainability within a community.
  - Wollongong City Council supports lifelong learning in the community either directly through the delivery of programs through the library, Botanic Gardens and Art Gallery, to name a few, or indirectly through a variety of partnerships with community associations and non-government organisations.
  - There are some obvious synergies between the Learning City Project and the [Creative Wollongong 2019-2024 Plan](#), the [Sustainable Wollongong 2030 Strategy](#) and the [Ageing Plan 2018-2022](#) that can be harnessed if managed well.

- ii. Internal systems will be established by June 2021 to drive the development of a Learning City Plan at both strategic and operational levels:
  - A Project Steering Committee (PSC) made up of relevant leaders within Wollongong City Council to set the strategic direction of the learning City Project.
  - A Project Control Group (PCG) comprised of internal stakeholders involved in the management or delivery of a variety of educational programs or resources.

### (3) Mobilisation and utilisation of resources

The Learning City PSC and PCG will utilise the [Australian Learning Community Framework](#), the [UNESCO video tutorials](#), the [UNESCO Guiding Documents](#) and the [Collective Impact](#) collaboration framework to scaffold the development of a Wollongong's Learning City Plan:

- i. Take stock of existing Council resources that support lifelong learning in the community, reflect on the unique challenges that remain and establish priorities for the project.
- ii. Identify key stakeholders in the community and develop a community engagement plan.
- iii. Align the goals of the Learning City Plan with other city planning goals and targets.
- iv. Develop an action plan and set clear short, medium and long-term goals for the project.

In laying a solid foundation of a learning city, Wollongong City Council is taking stock of what its already doing to support lifelong learning in the community both formally and informally; it is identifying the synergies between its emerging Learning City goals and existing strategic plans.

The road to becoming a learning city will be long and winding, but Wollongong is committed to driving innovation and creating a community that is informed, engaged, creative and connected. Lao Zhu said it best: *the journey of a thousand miles begins with one step*. Watch this space.

Contact Lara [lpugh@wollongong.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lpugh@wollongong.nsw.gov.au) if you have any feedback about this article.

## 8. Wyndham, Victoria

*Diane Tabbagh, Coordinator Learning Community, Libraries and Community Learning*, reports on many highlights implementing [Wyndham's Learning Community Strategy 2018-2023](#) by the Council.

### **UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities**

As a member of the Global Network of Learning Cities, and in line with the achievement of LCS Action 12: Engaging, Participating and Leading Globally, Wyndham has taken up many opportunities to collaborate and participate on the international stage.

Some highlights include:

- Presentation at Europe's Largest Interdisciplinary Forum of Science and Innovation 'ESOF'. Wyndham was invited to speak about our best practice model in learning city programs and policy and the advantages of joining a worldwide network of learning cities. <https://www.esof.eu/en>
- On Thursday 26 November, the Learning Community team presented at the [PASCAL Observatory](#) Entrepreneurial Learning Cities Network Meeting with the theme 'Reimagining Inclusive Economic Futures', sharing the progress Wyndham is making in the entrepreneurial and economic futures space. Representatives from PASCAL, Lithuania, Derby, Swansea, Udine (Italy), Modi'in (Israel) and Wyndham presented on issues defining/concerning their cities, their vision for change, and how they work with higher education.
- The Learning Community were also invited to present at the virtual UNESCO UIL Cluster of Learning Cities for Health and Well-Being Conference 3-4 December 2020, co-hosted by Cork (Ireland) and Osan (Korea) Learning Cities, with the theme *Presenting and investigating innovative and transferrable examples of best practice in UNESCO UIL Learning Cities across the world in supporting the health and well-being of their citizens*.

- The article “**Wyndham City: a tale of steady progress towards a sustainable learning community**” co-authored by Diane Tabbagh and Dr Leone Wheeler (ALCN) has been published in Adult Learning Australia’s 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary Australian Journal of Adult Learning.
- On 26 March 2021, the Learning Community Team presented at the conference Europe, the Asia Pacific and the Global Transformation Agenda. In the midst of this rapidly shifting global landscape, the conference brought together a range of speakers, from within and outside the EU Centre/ RMIT University Jean Monnet Network to discuss the various aspects of the SDGs and the 'Transformation Agenda'. Presenting amongst economists, academics, researchers and development experts, the story was shared of local government and the role Wyndham has played in transformation of the Sustainable Development Goals through their Empathy Partnerships Model using the Global Learning Festival that they co-led with Melton City Council, as an example of application.

### ***Wyndham Learning Festival***

The Learning Festival is an exciting and innovative project that has arisen out of Wyndham City Council’s Learning Community Strategy. Led by Wyndham Community & Education Centre, the theme of the 2020 lifelong and life-wide Wyndham Learning Festival was, coincidentally, “Healthy Learning, Healthy Lives”. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Wyndham Learning Festival (WLF) working group postponed the WLF until 23-30 November 2020 and moved the festival to be entirely online. With over 140 events, the virtual WLF proved to be a popular and timely response to the restrictions of the pandemic lockdown Wyndham found itself in. Due to the nature of the festival in response to the pandemic, the working group took the opportunity to bring the world to Wyndham and Wyndham to the world and attendees and events came in from across the globe. This spotlight on Wyndham has created some dynamic and fortuitous new partnerships and networks. Events included offerings for all interests and ages, including Chinese lantern making, Brazilian drumming, karate classes for beginners, dance grooves from West Africa, lessons of global cooking skills, Ancient Egypt Hieroglyphs, and the Matsunaga Institute in Hawaii shared stories of resilience, peace and conflict resolution.

Wyndham City Council lead various key events including the Festival’s signature event, WYNtalk: Finding Your Voice with Clare Bowditch which took place on 29 November. This fun, confidence-boosting, empowering and interactive event had the charismatic Clare sharing stories from her own life; singing and answer questions. Another key event included the Australian Learning Communities Network 2020 Roundtable, which was co-led and planned by WCC and the ALCN, and featured dynamic presentations from various speakers and learning cities around entrepreneurship with 21 attendees from across Australia, including from Daryl Wilson from the WCC Climate Futures Office. A recording of the session can be accessed here: <https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/news/australian-learning-communities-network-2020-roundtable-%E2%80%93-celebrating-entrepreneurial-models>

The Learning Community team also led an event where researchers Charlotte Bagnall from Manchester University and Lisa Mundy from the Murdoch Institute, spoke about the Middle School-Aged Years, wellbeing and COVID-19 to an intimate group of policy makers and educators working in this space. We are pleased to say this partnership will continue, and in collaboration with the WCC Middle Years Worknig Group led by Karen Thomson, we will be collaborating in a transitions project during 2021.

In another key Festival event, the Learning Community team partnered with the Department of Education Koori Engagement Support Officers for the West, Lisa and Judy to run a Professional Development session: ‘Brief Introduction to the Kulin Nations.’ After information on Acknowledgement to Country, traditional owners, Bunjil the Eagle and the importance of history and cultural ties, discussions shifted to the challenges that the Aboriginal people have had since the arrival of the white settlers. On moving forward and closing the gaps, the hosts noted that in as much as most of the communities are still struggling and passing on at a young age, there were positive strides that had been made, especially on the health for elders with illness. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and its affect on local communities was also discussed. The hosts then spoke on the Indigenous early childhood activities in Wyndham, and other activities like the Wyndham walk, cultural day at cultural sites, and lessons from the presenters in those sites.

A final WLF report [can be viewed here](#).

### ***Work Integrated Learning Student – Hellen Kibowen***

For the second half of 2020, the Australian Learning Communities Network (ALCN), RMIT University and Wyndham City Council partnered to host an RMIT International Development student to work with Wyndham City Council on the research and evaluation of two key projects: the Global Learning Festival (GLF) held in September 2020 and the Wyndham Learning Festival held in November 2020. The student selected for this placement, Hellen Kibowen, comes from an indigenous community in Kenya and was studying a Masters in International Development at RMIT University while also working part time as a project officer with the Burnet Institute. Hellen was very enthusiastic and with assistance from the Wyndham team added invaluable insight, humour and commitment to the two projects developing questionnaires and writing stories using the Most Significant Change Technique to showcase the impact of the two festivals on those involved. Hellen shared her reflections about her placement at the first ALCN Executive meeting for 2021 in February.

The Learning Community team were so impressed with the calibre of this student placement, another student has recently started on placement for the first half of 2021.

### ***Transformative Education Showcase***

On Friday 24 July 2020, Wyndham's Learning Community, in partnership with Wyndham Community and Education Centre, ran a three-hour online Transformative Education Showcase. Attendees joined from across the globe and across the Wyndham Community, including from Denmark, France and the UK and the Department of Education, community organisations, schools and researchers. The rich conversations from attendees and stimulating presentations from across the globe by the impressive speaker line-up including Casper Rongsted of Nordic Schools in Denmark, Charlotte Bagnall from the UK, Dr Santino Atem Deng from Victoria University and Alison, Yolette and Rennis from WELS, encouraged us to think differently and work towards change in global learning and education. The speaker presentations, the panel Q&A and finally the 2 breakout sessions addressing two of Wyndham's 'wicked transition' problems provided an interactive and dynamic showcase with a high degree of engagement from the participants those involved.

### ***The Wyndham Integrated Learning Group – #2***

Building on a previous incarnation of this group, the Wyndham Integrated Learning Group 2 (WILG2) reconvened with a new and exciting project. Working collaboratively, WILG2 aims to enhance inclusion and equity in learning for People with Disability aged 15-30 in Wyndham. WILG2 comprises 15 community and council leaders working towards shared project goals, including from learning sectors, local government, disability action groups and higher education. WILG2 uses evidence-based approaches to support equitable pathways and outcomes for place-based learning needs for the target cohort in Wyndham, with ambitious goals including:

- Supporting the enhancement of learning providers' organisational culture, structures, systems, processes and practices to ensure they are designing learning for People with Disability from the target age cohort
- Advocating for learning recruitment and promotion which targets People with Disability
- Advocating that choice and control drives learning opportunities for 15-30-year olds with disability in Wyndham
- Supporting learning providers in Wyndham to continuously adjust teaching and learning strategies to support learning for People with Disability
- Developing a shared vision statement across Wyndham on learning access and equity until 2023.

This project has arisen from Action 7 of the Wyndham Learning Community Strategy 2018- 2023 (LCS), and is being led by the National Disability Coordination Officer – Western Melbourne Region with support from the Learning Community team at Wyndham City Council.

### ***Global Learning Festival A Success!***

From 1-4 September 2020, the City of Melton and the City of Wyndham co-led the inaugural Global Learning Festival with over 20 other partners. Over 110 events were run across the globe; participants included Turkey, U.K., Israel, Doha, Taiwan, Colombia, Mexico, and Australia. The event encouraged people to learn something new as well as virtually meet new people from around the globe! Many of the events were recorded and can be seen here: <https://bit.ly/3lIMn7A>.

This event supports Action 12 of the LCS 2018-2023 and fosters learning innovation and partnerships. For more information <https://www.globallearningfestival.com/>

### **WYNTalk: Don't just Rebuild, Re-imagine**

As Wyndham's signature contribution to the Global Learning Festival, our WYNTalk was very well received with over 230 registrations. Kate Roffey moderated a stimulating, interesting and thought-provoking conversation between Workplace culture expert Steve Simpson, Futurist, Graeme Codrington and Urban planner Ludo Campbell-Reid. Led by the Libraries and Learning Community team in partnership with the City Design and Liveability Team, the theme of this WynTalk was: *Don't Just Rebuild; Reimagine*. People from across the globe including many locally from Wyndham but others from across Australia and as far as South Africa, India, Kenya and the UK joined this interactive event. Graeme Codrington shared his passion for reimagining our life (as opposed to a new normal), by trying to anticipate what could happen after the COVID experience, and helping people prepare for it now. Steve Simpson, encouraged us to consider what we need our new workplace culture to be.

Ludo Campbell-Reid then addressed the question of how we make better cities? Explaining that the issues of cities are linked to the health of the citizens and economy, he pointed out that many are saying cities are now in crisis – but they have always been in crisis so why do we want to rush back? We should build back better. Bold progressive city leaders are doing incredible things and we can take the lead from them now. The implications of this time are overwhelming but huge. Working from Home changes everything and could be one of the greatest inventions and disruptions since combustion. There will be an urban renaissance which will recharge our local streets.

A recording of the event can be accessed <https://vimeo.com/454560678>. This event was linked to action 13 of the Learning Community Strategy 2018-2023, and supports innovation in learning as one of the key outcomes for this work.

### **Learnwest Network**

The Wyndham Community Learning unit, in partnership with other councils in the West of Melbourne, are part of the LearnWest Network. The LearnWest Network supports experienced and emerging Learning Community practitioners in the Western Metropolitan Region of Melbourne in a community of practice where lifelong learning drives an increase in the economic and social capacity of our communities. The LearnWest network has committed to a shared project in 2021. The Learning for Earning festival will help our communities in a united way to gain knowledge in starting or changing careers including upskilling and understanding dominant and emerging industries and opportunities for the future. The festival audience will be adults and young people living in the Western region of Melbourne. The Festival will offer thirty, one-hour live online events based around six streams across the three days, plus several pre-recorded events. The live events will also be recorded to create a library of resources to be shared amongst LearnWest members and their communities. The festival will run from Thursday 27 May to Saturday 29 May 2021. The Festival Streams are: Learning; Skills; Career Planning and Pathways; Employment; Industry; and Business and Entrepreneurship. For more information [check the website](#).